

Town hall meetings address joint basing process, effects on garrison employees

FSH Public Affairs

U.S. Army Garrison commander, Col. Mary Garr hosted two town hall meetings Jan. 28 to inform Fort Sam Houston garrison employees about the progress of Joint Base San Antonio.

Joint basing, which includes Fort Sam Houston, as well as Lackland and Randolph Air Force Bases, was mandated by the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure decision made by Congress.

“Here at Fort Sam, the benefit we have from the 2005 BRAC decision is all the growth we are seeing here; the growth you are all a part of,” Garr said, noting some of the new commands coming to FSH such as the Medical Education Training Command, Installation Management Command Headquarters and Family and Morale, Welfare and Recreation Command.

Garr talked about the current organizational structure and what changes that would be taking place over the next several months.

"Today we fall under the Installation Management Command, and our installation commander is Maj. Gen. Russell Czerw," she said.

“Come IOC [initial operational capability] moving into FOC [full operational capability], we will be transitioning into an element under the Air Education and Training Command. That is the TRADOC [U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command] equivalent for the Air Force, commanded by a four-star general, Gen. [Stephen R.] Lorenz.”

AETC oversees all the training and doctrine programming for the Air Force world-wide.

“We are going to become part of that system, but as Joint Base San Antonio we will be unique in that we are not a training mission element,” Garr said. “We will provide installation support services for Joint Base San Antonio.”

The FSH Garrison will become part of the 502nd Air Base Wing, and the new wing commander, Air Force Brig. Gen. Leonard A. Patrick, will become the installation commander.

The 502nd ABW stood up July 28 and Patrick moved into temporary quarters on FSH in August. Under the 502nd ABW, there will be three mission support groups: the 502nd MSG, currently Fort Sam Houston Garrison; the 902nd MSG at Randolph AFB; and the 802nd MSG at Lackland AFB.

Lackland and Randolph started operating under their new designations Feb. 2.

FSH Garrison will become the 502nd MSG sometime in April, Garr said.

Joint Base San Antonio will become fully operational Oct. 1 and FSH Garrison employees will become Air Force employees Oct. 10.

Because our mission supports mostly Army personnel, most program names will not change, such as Army Community Service. “Our signage will not change or may become bilingual over time,” Garr said.

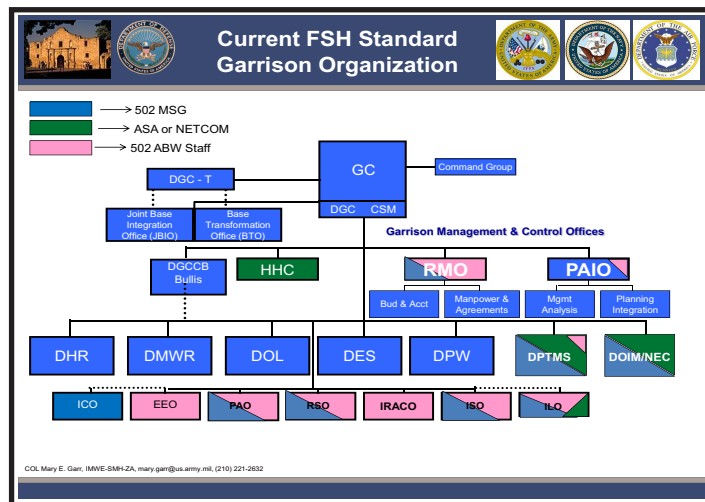
"We want to ensure that the services we provide today will be continued under the joint base, the colonel said.

Army-specific programs and activities such as Casualty Affairs, Survivor Outreach Services, Army Continuing Education System, the Sexual Assault and Response Program, the Soldier Family Assistance Center, the Warrior and Family Support Center, tactical vehicle maintenance, privatized Army housing and Army Lodging, and other Army-unique functions, will fall under the Army Support Activity which will be established between the April and October.

Garr and Meg Reyes, from the Air Force Personnel Center, also addressed how the changeover from Army to Air Force would affect employee personnel status.

“Your pay is not going to change. Your benefits are not going to change,” Garr said. “Your duty location will not change unless you decide to take a job elsewhere.”

“What will change is your employing agency, today you are proud



“Can I tell you that all of you are happy about transitioning? Can I tell you this is the best thing? No, I know you have some concerns and challenges that you are facing,” Reyes added.

She identified some of the major differences between being an Army civilian employee and an Air Force civilian employee.

Some changes include:

The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center will become the Air Force Personnel Center.

Pay dates will change. Army civilians are paid on the second Thursday after a pay period begins; the Air Force is paid the first Friday after a pay period begins.

New Common Access Cards will be issued, but it is still unclear when that process will take place.

The Army currently uses a resume system. The Air Force uses “skills-coding” to identify job experience. Skills-coding is a career brief the Air Force Personnel Center generates for employees where codes represent duties performed.

“For Army employees who are interested in being considered for Air Force positions after they transition at FOC, we will make sure they are skill-coded if we have a resume,” Reyes said.

“We are asking for resumes 90 days ahead of time, on a volunteer basis. Once we receive them we will submit them to [Air Force Manpower Agency] for skills-coding. That’s only if we don’t go to a resume-based system by that time.”

“We are in the process of seeking a resume-based application similar to what the Army does now,” Reyes added.

To review the slide presentation or the questions posed during the town hall meetings, visit the Fort Sam Houston intranet home page at <https://fsh-intranet.amedd.army.mil/> and click on the links at the bottom of the page.

Department of the Army civilians; on 1 October, most of you will be proud Department of the Air Force civilians," the colonel added.

“1 October 2010 is not an end state. We will continue to evolve and refine Joint Base San Antonio over time to ensure we meet the needs of the people, units and missions of Fort Sam Houston. We need everyone on the team to help ensure success.” Garr said.

“We are one military, one team.”

Army employees will transfer into the Air Force system "as-is." Most people will retain their current jobs; pay plan, series and grade; and benefits.

National Security Personnel System employees will be transferring back into the Government Service system, not because of joint basing, but because it was directed by the DoD, but the transfer date has not yet been determined.

“There are certain positions that are going to ASA, the wing staff or other areas within the garrison,” Reyes said. “But, if you are postured to come to the wing staff, you will come as you are. There are a few instances where it will change, but we are working through those individuals right now.”

People's supervisory chain, job title and/or duty location may change as the mission warrants.

“The official date of joint basing is Oct. 1, when everything has been signed,” Reyes said. “We are trying to lessen the impact to the employees, so we are looking at transitioning on Oct. 10 which is a pay period beginning date.”